

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-16, 20, 21, 29, and 55 are currently pending in the subject application and are presently under consideration. Claims 1-3, 12, 14, 15, 29, and 55 are amended as shown on pages 2-5 herein. Applicants' representative respectfully requests entry of these amendments since no new matter is added and such amendments are believed to place the application in condition for allowance or better form for appeal. Favorable reconsideration of the subject patent application is respectfully requested in view of the comments and amendments herein.

**I. Rejection of Claims 1-16, 20, 21, 29, and 55 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)**

Claims 1-16, 20, 21, 29, and 55 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Heckerman *et al.* (Inferring Informational Goals from Free-Text Queries: A Bayesian Approach) in view of Miller *et al.* (US 6,741,188). This rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reason. Heckerman *et al.*, alone or in combination with Miller *et al.*, does not teach or suggest each and every limitation of applicants' claimed invention.

To reject claims in an application under §103, an examiner must establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. A *prima facie* case of obviousness is established by a showing of three basic criteria. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) **must teach or suggest all the claim limitations**. See MPEP §706.02(j) (emphasis added). The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art and not based on applicant's disclosure. See *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

Applicants' claimed invention relates to information retrieval, and more particularly to predicting high-level informational goals and the appropriate level of detail for an answer from observable linguistic features in queries. To this end, amended independent claim 1 (and similarly independent claims 29 and 55) recites *an inference engine that infers one or more informational goals based, at least in part, on at least one of the query, the extrinsic data and an inference data stored in the inference model, the inference engine further inferring one or more*

*preferred levels of detail for an answer based at least on one of an inferred age of a user or an application being employed by the user.* Heckerman *et al.*, alone or in combination with Miller *et al.*, does not teach or suggest such claimed aspects.

Heckerman *et al.* relates to a Bayesian approach to modeling the relationship between words in a user's query for assistance and the informational goals of the user (*See Abstract*). The cited document discloses inferring a probability distribution over a set of user goals given a user query (*See section 2, column 1*). Examiner admits that Heckerman *et al.* does not teach or suggest inferring a level of detail for an answer based on at least one of an inferred age of a user, a physical location of the user, and an application being employed by the user (*See Office Action dated December 14, 2006, p. 4*), and offers Miller *et al.* to cure these deficiencies. Miller *et al.* relates to a system for directing information to specific geographic locations; however, in view of the current amendments, Examiner's contention is believed to be moot. Miller *et al.* is silent with respect to an inferred age of a user or an application being used by a user.

In view of the foregoing, Miller *et al.* does not remedy the admitted deficiencies of Heckerman *et al.* with respect to independent claims 1, 29, and 55. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1, 29, and 55, and associated dependent claims 2-16, 20, and 21, should be withdrawn.

**CONCLUSION**

The present application is believed to be in condition for allowance in view of the above comments. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

In the event any fees are due in connection with this document, the Commissioner is authorized to charge those fees to Deposit Account No. 50-1063 [MSFTP215US].

Should the Examiner believe a telephone interview would be helpful to expedite favorable prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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